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Viewing cable 09BUENOSAIRES498, ARGENTINE FM TAIANA ON MOD EVICTION AND OTHER

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BUENOSAIRES498	2009-04-30 13:57	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Buenos Aires

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1356989-la-presidenta-queria-una-relacion-mas-estrecha-con-estados-unidos>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000498

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/29/2029
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [KSUM](#) [PGOV](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE FM TAIANA ON MOD EVICTION AND OTHER
ISSUES

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 0375 (B) BUENOS AIRES 0405

¶1. (C) Summary: In response to the Ambassador's April 22 letter asking Argentine FM Taiana to intervene with the MOD to help find suitable office space for the Military Group in advance of its eviction from MOD headquarters (ref A), Taiana said he had spoken with MOD Nilda Garre and suggested the Ambassador follow up on her suggestion that office space might be available at the Argentine Military Geographical Institute (IGM). Taiana praised President Obama's performance at the Summit of the Americas, said he wanted to make U.S.-Argentine relations "a positive story," and asked for work on a U.S. gesture to President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (CFK) to belay press reports of negative relations. He said Bolivian President Evo Morales wanted to signal a desire for better relations with President Obama. He thanked the Ambassador for alerting him to the imminent release in Washington of two reports and commented that he agreed on the need for Argentina to "pick its fights" better. End summary.

New Offices for Military Group

¶2. (C) Following up on his unanswered March 31 letter to MOD Nilda Garre regarding the Military Groups's eviction from MOD headquarters and two other MOD facilities, the Ambassador had sent FM Taiana an April 22 letter requesting MFA assistance since the 1964 military assistance agreement had been signed with the MFA. The letter noted our desire to build on positive, forward movement in bilateral relations in the wake of cooperation in the G-20 and at the Summit of the Americas (SOA) but informed FM Taiana that the MOD had asked the Military Group to vacate its offices by May 4, despite a commitment at the last Bilateral Defense Working Group meeting to put this and other issues related to updating our 1964 agreement on the agenda for a subsequent BWG meeting. The Ambassador met one-on-one April 29 with Taiana, who gave his response to the Ambassador's letter. Taiana said he had spoken privately with Garre, who said she wants to continue collaboration but felt the U.S. had ignored for months her stated desire to remove foreign tenants from MOD facilities and thus apparently had asked that a date be fixed to move ahead. The Ambassador explained that the Embassy had not ignored or forgotten the MOD's desire but simply had nowhere else to locate the Milgroup (and it had not received any official notification). The Ambassador reviewed our arguments for complying with the 1964 agreement for the GOA to provide office space for the Military Group and thus facilitate bilateral cooperation, and he noted that senior MOD and DOD officials had previously agreed to address this issue in regular bilateral consultations during 2009.

¶3. (C) FM Taiana said MOD Garre had suggested there might be office space available for the Military Group at the Military Geographical Institute (IGM), not far from the Embassy. But Taiana was not empowered to offer this. He encouraged the Ambassador to call Garre in advance of the May 4 deadline for eviction and make clear we were looking to work with her toward a solution.

Bilateral Relations

¶4. (C) Taiana expressed annoyance that "Clarín" and "La Nación" newspapers and other media kept harping on supposed snubs of President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (CFK) by President Obama or other alleged signs of USG indifference toward Argentina. "We want the story to be positive," he said, noting that CFK in all her private and public remarks has been full of praise and admiration for President Obama. Taiana said he hopes, via some kind of contact between CFK and President Obama, to show that relations are positive, as he had discussed with WHA Assistant Secretary Shannon. He said CFK, in her opening address at the Summit of the Americas (SOA) in Port of Spain, had sought to strike a balanced tone between extremes on political spectrum in Latin America, and in his view she succeeded. He noted the positive feedback she got from hard-left leaders as well as

moderates at the SOA. He contrasted her speech with that of Nicaraguan President Ortega, which was all about the past.

¶15. (C) Taiana said he thought the SOA atmosphere in general had been very positive. He said it was so positive that no one at the SOA wanted to fight over the wording of a Summit declaration document even though many did not like parts of it, so the leaders came up with the ""elegant"" solution of

having PM Manning as host sign on behalf of all the leaders. Taiana contrasted this with the 2005 Mar del Plata SOA, where delegations fought for hours over a paragraph.

¶16. (C) President Obama's April 18 meeting with the dozen South American (UNASUR) leaders was ""the best meeting"" he had ever seen between an American president and Latin leaders. He was very impressed by President Obama's sincerity and active listening. Taiana said Bolivian President Evo Morales seemed on edge, rattled perhaps by a recent foiled attempt on his life. Taiana speculated that Evo may also have been ill at ease at the SOA because he was accustomed to being the only racial or ethnic ""minority"" face at these meetings, a distinction he had to share with President Obama in this group. Taiana said he understood Morales had subsequently called Brazilian President Lula, saying that he really wanted better relations with the United States and seeking Lula's assistance in that regard. The Ambassador noted that Morales had said as much in his interview with Argentine daily ""Clarín"" on April 28. (Comment: Lula may have shared this last bit with the Argentines during his April 24 visit to Buenos Aires.)

¶17. (C) The Ambassador spoke briefly with CFK on the evening of April 27 after a ceremony commemorating the peaceful resolution of the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia (septel). She said she thought the Summit of the Americas had really changed the atmosphere in the region and that she wanted to continue to work with President Obama and others to move in positive directions in post-summit work.

Scorecards

¶18. (C) The Ambassador advised Taiana that the following day in Washington the Department was scheduled to release the Country Reports on terrorism for 2008 and USTR the Special 301 Report on intellectual property rights protection. Taiana raised his intemperate April 3 letter to the Ambassador protesting the USG's Investment Climate Statement on Argentina. He expressed relief that his letter had not been leaked, and he said he was worried that Washington might perceive the GOA as excessively thin-skinned or whiny if it complained about every unfavorable remark. The Ambassador noted the American refrain about the ""need to pick your battles"" carefully. Taiana laughed and said he fully agreed; he just needed to convince ""them.""

Bio Note

¶19. (C) Taiana was in a friendly mood. He told the Ambassador he took his family with him to Washington for the Antarctic Treaty ceremony in early April, and that it was a delightful ""homecoming"" for him and his family to visit old haunts, since they had spent several years living in the Washington area when he worked on the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. He clearly wants to put bilateral relations on a firmer and stable footing but recognizes the challenges and noted the fact that Argentina is in electoral campaign season at present.

WAYNE